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BOTANICAL PARTICIPATION IN WAR WORK¹

FROM the subject assigned me in this symposium, which, by the way, was before the armistice was signed, one naturally would suppose that what was expected was a catalogue of the achievements of botany during the war. From the amount of time allotted for this effort it becomes equally obvious that no such thing is possible. I therefore find myself in the delightful position of being free to disregard the subject (for no one can disregard the time limit) and shall discuss some aspects of the way in which botany may be regarded as having accomplished its full share in the world struggle, as well as attempt to point out the overwhelming importance of a recognition of the place the subject should occupy in any peace plan. This I shall hope to do without encroaching unduly upon the subjects assigned to those in this or other symposiums which have been announced, although I am inclined to think that at this time there cannot be too great a reiteration of the fundamental facts calculated to impress the public at large with some of the reasons which justify the existence of the science of botany.

Of course, one might attempt to point out the achievements of botanists, who, because of their special interests or training, have been of invaluable assistance in suggesting various botanical raw materials for which the commercial man was seeking, or in obtaining the right kind of sphagnum for surgical dressings, or their part in the work of the Bureau of Air-Craft Production or the Sanitary Corps or in the perfection of the gas mask and similar strictly war work. Then if one were permitted to dwell upon the far-reaching effect of the agricultural application of botanical investi-

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¹ Read at the Symposium of Section G, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Baltimore, December 26, 1918.